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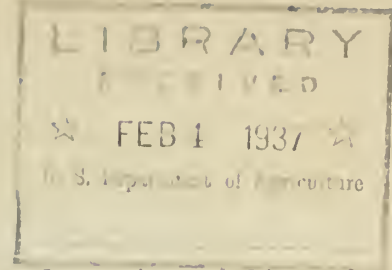
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Midwinter Meat Canning



A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Wednesday, January 27, 1937.

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MR. GAPEN: We're getting a day ahead of ourselves this week on our Department of Agriculture schedule. We're sending you the Household Calendar on Wednesday this time instead of on Thursday, as has been the custom lately.

Miss Van Deman, I'm going to let you announce your own subject. I know that's no chore for you.

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, it's no chore at all. The topic of the day is midwinter meat canning, home canning of course. And it's not a bit of a chore to lift a few of the do's and dont's from our new canning bulletin.

But I can tell you it was a chore for Label Stienbarger to get the facts to put into that bulletin. She packed different kinds of meats into tin cans and glass jars, and processed them for different times at different temperatures. Then she opened up the cans and tasted the meat after it had been stored for months to see which method gave best results. Meat is one of the trickiest foods the home canner can tackle. And Miss Stienbarger is one of the people who'd rather be safe than sick. She couldn't sleep nights if she thought the directions in that bulletin for canning meats weren't far over onto the side of safety.

MR. GAPEN: Miss Van Deman, even at the risk of offending some of our friends who don't like to have men butt in on your home economics talks, won't you please give the title of that canning bulletin?

MISS VAN DEMAN: I will, with pleasure. The full title is "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats".

MR. GAPEN: Thank you. And just to show there's no mystery whatever about that bulletin title I'm going to repeat it, "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats". Now go ahead, Miss Van Deman, I'll try not to interrupt again.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I'm very glad to have you check me up, Mr. Gapen. Two heads are always better than one.

Now before I go into details about the meat canning, I want to say just a word about the letters that have come since last Thursday's talk about the hot school lunches.

The president of a PTA out in North Dakota wrote about the lunches her club is serving. She says they are almost a necessity to the younger children and the youngsters who come in from the country, especially during the weather

(over)

they're having out there - with snow and ice and below-zero temperatures. She sent her letter air mail, and I put a copy of the menus and recipes for hot school lunches into the return mail immediately.

Then there have been many, many other very interesting letters from school superintendents, and managers and prospective managers of lunch rooms and school cafeterias, and from homemakers, including one who lives near the school and sends in hot cocoa every day. And one woman who modestly calls herself a cook-maid in an emergency nursery school asked for the menus and recipes for noon meals at the nursery school. I wish I could send a personal message back with the bulletins, for I certainly wish you well in all your school lunch projects.

Now getting back to the meat canning. Unless the flood and unseasonable weather in some other parts of the country have upset the usual routine, this is the time of year when farm people are curing and canning their home-slaughtered beef and pork and lamb.

As I said a moment ago, meat is a food that you have to use extreme care with in canning. It's a protein food. It spoils easily. Heat penetrates it slowly. And it has to be heated to a very high temperature (much higher than the boiling point of water) in order to kill the bacteria that cause spoilage. If meat isn't given a processing in the cans long enough and hot enough, these pestiferous bacteria may wake up and become active later and cause a lot of grief.

So we believe that it's essential to success and to safety to process cans of meat in a steam-pressure canner. And by that I don't mean an ordinary steamer. I mean one of the heavy metal affairs, equipped with pet-cock and pressure gauge, and with a lid clamped down to make it air tight.

MR. GAPEN: A miniature of those big retorts the commercial canners use?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, that's it. This steam under pressure forces intense heat rapidly through the meat to the center of the cans, and sterilizes it. Note the emphasis on the center of the cans.

Now I know somebody's going to come back and say that she's processed meat in a boiling water bath and never lost a can - well almost never, or maybe just a few cans. Well, all I can say is that for one report like that we have hundreds to the contrary. Only the other day I had a letter from someone in New Jersey who said she's lost a quantity of home-canned chicken and duck that she's processed in the water bath. And when people do get by with the water-bath method, I generally find that they've stored the canned meat in a cold cellar. The low temperature has kept the bacteria inactive. But we don't consider that safe.

As usual I've spent more time than I intended on this one point - processing canned meat under steam pressure. But after all there's no use in going into the fine points about containers and packing and seasoning, and so on unless the canned meat is going to keep.

And I know that when it comes to times and temperatures and details like that, you'll want printed directions to use as a kitchen handbook.

But just in case severe weather has frozen your meat and you're in doubt as to whether to can it, let me say this. Yes, frozen meat may be canned, but

it doesn't make so high-quality a product as meat that's been merely chilled. But if you have to use it or take a loss, at least do not thaw it out before you begin the canning operations. Keep it frozen until you are ready to can it. Then cut or saw it into strips one or two inches thick. Plunge these at once into boiling water and simmer until the color of the raw meat has almost disappeared. Pack this hot meat into the containers (glass jars or tin cans) and process at once.

MR. GAPPEN: Under steam pressure.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, under 15 pounds of steam pressure, which is equivalent to 250°F.

MR. GAPPEN: And for how long?

MISS VAN DEMAN: From 85 to 120 minutes, depending on the size of the containers and whether they're glass or tin, and on how the meat is packed. It's hard to carry all the exact figures in the head.

MR. GAPPEN: The time tables in your canning bulletin give all those details, I suppose.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, That's right, they are in the bulletin.

MR. GAPPEN: Thank you, Miss Van Deman. We'll be seeing you here in the studio again next week. And now for the benefit of anyone who didn't hear the title of the bulletin at the first of this broadcast, I'm going to repeat it, "Home Canning of Fruits, Vegetables, and Meats". If you drop a card to the Bureau of Home Economics here in Washington, Miss Van Deman will see to it that you get a copy of this home canning bulletin.

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